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Square 1 Startup Weekend

March 29, 2021

March 5-7th, participants of the annual Square 1 Startup Weekend gathered in the Allen E. Paulson College of Engineering and Computing to bring their ideas to life. Fifteen students ranging from freshmen to doctoral levels came together to hone their entrepreneurial skills by creating student-run companies from scratch.

Organized by the Square 1 student organization, this year's event was smaller and felt a little different overall as we navigated event planning through the pandemic. Square 1 President, Emma Tirlot welcomed students and managed a hybrid in-person/online event for the first time in its history.

"I think it was a good event," said Ms. Tirlot. "Although it was smaller, the students' ideas were still great and they did a good job throughout the weekend."

Sean Alexander, current Georgia Tech student and Co-Founder of Next Publius, facilitated virtually through Zoom, teaching the students how to create their own lean canvas and pitch deck. Several mentors from the Atlanta area and one from Connecticut also Zoomed in to offer advice to our students.

On the first night, the students shared their ideas and voted, resulting in 5 student businesses. The businesses were:

- Mercury Mobile Printers – Ben Youngstrom – 3D printers in durable cases to be used in disaster relief applications or as educational training for kids in K-12.
- PictelX – Michael Bolar – social media platform built by gamers for gamers.
- Curren\$y – Gregory Cooper – Money transfer through cryptocurrency for foreign exchange students.
- R.I.S.E. – Darley Desormo – Restoring inspiration in student endeavors, mentoring program for student-athletes.
- SciTech – Aishwarya Potluri – mobile platform to consolidate and make charting for caregivers simpler.

Teams spent time researching, running numbers, and talking to potential customers and users over the weekend. They took all that they learned throughout the weekend and formulated their pitches.

The event came to a close on Monday evening in the Williams Center on campus, through Zoom and broadcast live to the Georgia Southern Business Innovation Group's Facebook page. Students pitched to a panel of professors from the University's Intellectual Property Committee.

The winner of this year's event is Mercury Mobile Printers taking home \$150 and a year-long membership to the BIG Innovation Incubator (I2) in Downtown Statesboro. The People's Choice award went to Curren\$y, winning \$50 and a 6-month membership to BIG's I2.



This year's winner, Mercury Mobile Printers.

One judge, Dr. Robert Batchelor said, "It's a real pleasure to see such innovative ideas coming from students as well. In fact, the faculty often have their big elaborate presentations, but I think we're often even more surprised sometimes by the creative ideas that come out of students in things like this." Batchelor went on to say, "I've been doing this for a few years now. I just enjoy it every time."

The weekend would not have been possible without the help of wonderful sponsors including the Savannah Economic Development Authority (this year's title sponsor), the Allen E. Paulson College of Engineering and Computing for allowing us space for the weekend, the GS Office of International Programs and Services, the GS Office of Academic Affairs, Rolling Monkey, the Downtown Statesboro Development Authority, the Business Innovation Group (BIG), and the Downtown Rotary Club for providing food and caffeine for the students throughout the weekend. Congratulations once again to our winners. If you are a student interested in getting involved in [Square 1](#) then find them through the Eagle Engage portal for student organizations. If you are interested in supporting our student endeavors, please contact [Suzanne Hallman](#) with BIG.

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